



Community Services Department

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 17, 2015
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Erik Strunk, Community Services Department Director
SUBJECT: Update on Possible Library Operations at the Media Center

This memo is in response to Councilmember Turner's request from the City Council workshop meeting of March 17, 2015. Specifically, Councilmember Turner requested staff examine the possibility of re-purposing a portion of the Channel 11 Media Center as a new western area branch library.

Background

As you know, the Media Center is owned by the City and connected to the Renaissance Glendale Hotel and Spa complex located in Westgate directly adjacent to the Gila River Arena and University of Phoenix stadium. Exclusive of the Convention Center, the Media Center was constructed in 2008 and consists of three floors and a rooftop viewing area – all of which were designed for use by Glendale Channel 11 as studio, office and production area space. The first floor consists of an approximately 400 square foot television control room, a 1,200 square foot television studio, a 3,000 square foot “green screen” studio, and a 180 square foot guest waiting area, and restrooms. The second floor consists of a 5,829 square foot area that provides room for staff office cubicles, a conference room that can seat up to 12 persons, and two separate enclosed edit bay areas for Channel 11 programming. The third floor is 5,544 square feet in size and is currently vacant. It is used for special city functions and on occasion, is rented by the Renaissance Hotel for private functions. The rooftop area is accessible by the elevator system and consists of approximately 2,270 square foot outdoor viewing area that has been used by local and national media outlets for televised programs showcasing many of the national and international “mega-events” that have occurred at the University of Phoenix Stadium since it opened in 2008 (i.e. – Super Bowl, the Bowl Championship Series, soccer events, and the Fiesta Bowl). By contractual agreement, the Media Center is allocated 21 parking spaces located outside at the main entrance to the facility.

Analysis

As requested, a preliminary analysis indicates that a portion of the second floor could be used by library staff for office space, the third floor could be used to house a 5,544 square foot public library and the fourth floor could be used as an open-air, outdoor reading area. Additionally, the City could consider a future opportunity to issue an RFP to partner with a qualified, outside organization to provide proper supervision and instruction to library patrons regarding the use of the of the green screen room and edit bays by Glendale residents and business owners for educational and economic development opportunities.

Although portions of the Media Center may be viable for the provision of library services, preliminary staff analysis has identified the following initial challenges:

- ☐ Ongoing Costs: As envisioned, the Western Area Branch Library at the media center would be open 40 hours each week. With staffing, supplies and utilities, it is conservatively estimated that it would cost approximately \$472,000 a year to operate the library at this site (with an additional \$25,000 first-year operating contingency). This does not include future technology replacement costs that would be incurred in future years. Unless reprogrammed from elsewhere at the direction of Council, no funds have been appropriated to pay for these new, ongoing, expenses.
- ☐ Parking: By contract, there are 21 parking spaces available to the Media Center which can be used by the City at all hours of the day, regardless of what activities are taking place in or around the Westgate, Arena and Stadium area. The use of the Media Center as a Western Area Branch Library would require that approximately 40-50 spaces be reserved for patrons and library staff. There are an additional 440 spaces available to the City during non-event days at the Arena; however, they are maintained and operated by the Renaissance Hotel. On non-event days, they could be used for a Media Center Library; however, outside of the existing agreement (C-6300), the City would have to negotiate with the hotel for access and use parking spaces by library patrons. Additionally, under the current agreement, the parking spaces would not be available for Library patrons during Arena event days. These events would consist of Arizona Coyotes games (2 pre-season games plus 41 regularly scheduled hockey games each year) and approximately 15-20 non-hockey events. Each of these would “black out” use of the parking garage to the City for approximately 60 event nights per year. Other parking obligations are in place for the Arizona Cardinals games (10 pre-season and regularly scheduled NFL home games each year), the Fiesta Bowl (one event per year), and 2-3 “mega-events” type activities the University of Phoenix Stadium each year (concerts, other sporting events such as international soccer). This does not include special mega events of an international significance at the Stadium such as the Super Bowl, the College National Championship, the Final Four event or post-season play-off games. Unless negotiated, sufficient parking will be at issue.
- ☐ Convenience to Public: Unless additional parking is secured, the impact of the planned and unplanned events at the arena and University of Phoenix Stadium will prove to be problematic from an operational standpoint. As indicated, it is envisioned a Western Area Branch Library at the Media Center would be open 40 hours per week. This would amount to 2,080 hours per year. While the sports schedules are established almost a year in advance for both professional teams (the Arizona Cardinals, Arizona Coyotes, Fiesta Bowl, etc.), the prospect of non-hockey events, play-offs and additional, unplanned “Mega-Events” will present difficulty in developing a consistent schedule for the operating hours of a proposed library at the Media Center. It will restrict the ability to provide evening hours (typically hockey games are played on Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday, 6 – 10 p.m., however, exact times are subject to annual change by the NHL) and hours on Sunday (for Cardinal’s games – roughly 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.). This would not include any special black-out dates related for events that occur over multiple days (i.e. - Super Bowl, BCS, Final Four). While it would be possible to operate, the impact of these events will result in an irregular/intermittent schedule for hours of operation and the days of the week and will change from year to year – which will have a direct impact on library patronage and use of the library.
- ☐ Strategic Shift: The current community expectation calls for a 35,000 square foot library at Heroes Regional Park. Due to funding constraints, such a facility is not currently an option nor will it be for the foreseeable future. As such, the last key item is whether the potential relocation of library

services from Heroes Regional Park to the Media Center would be a permanent or temporary solution for library services for this portion of the City. Should a decision be made to move forward with the Media Center location, it will be essential to communicate the rationale and justification for doing so. It is envisioned that this would occur as a part of a public presentation and conversation with the Library Advisory Board.

- Use of Development Impact Fees (DIF): There are one-time capital expenses that would amount to approximately \$935,000 (which includes a 10% contingency). These consist of items such as furnishings, remodeling expenses, opening-day collections and shelving and other items such as computers, tablets, phones, tablet dispensers, 3D printers and regular printers. These funds are currently available in the Library DIF, are eligible for this use and would be used to pay for these necessary expenses (they are restricted for library use only). The use of these funds for this purpose would require Council approval. If so, it is recommended the automated book distribution machine currently planned for Hero's Regional Park in the FY 15-16 CIP budget no longer be pursued.

Conclusion

At this point in time and for the aforementioned reasons, staff recommends exploration of other possible locations for a Western Area Branch Library and return to Council later this year with a menu of options from which to possibly choose. Staff also recommends this also be done in partnership with the Library Advisory Board through public engagement. Quick samples of other possible options might include:

- The placement of manufactured buildings on land owned by the City at Heroes Regional Park
- A possible partnership with existing school sites
- The possible purchase of a vacant building
- The automated library book machine

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 930-2827. Thanks and we look forward to presenting more detailed information to Council later this year.

C: Dick Bowers, Acting City Manager
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